

## FAMOUS IN NAVAL ANNALS

Historic Duel Between the Ironclads  
Monitor and Merrimac.

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EVENT

Pioneer Ironclads Revolutionize  
Navies of the World—Wooden  
Warships Sent to the  
Junkpile.

Fifty years ago the coming Saturday the most remarkable battle in naval annals up to that time was fought in Hampton Roads between the Monitor and the Merrimac. It was the first duel fought by ironclad warships and demonstrated the worthlessness of wooden ships in combat with ironclads. A revolution in the naval architecture of the world was the result. On March 8, 1862, the day before the duel with the Monitor, the rebel ironclad Merrimac attacked and destroyed the Congress and the Cumberland, two United States frigates lying at Newport News. The frigate Minnesota was also attacked, but being in shallow water the rebel ironclad's guns could not be brought to bear on it and its fate was deferred until the following day. Between sunset and sunrise the unexpected, for the confederates, happened.

The original Merrimac was scuttled April 2, 1861, when the United States naval officers abandoned Gosport navy yard. The confederates raised it and transformed it into a formidable ironclad ram, which they named the Virginia. In his "Three Decades of Federal Legislation" (1880), Hon. R. S. Cox, a distinguished New York congressman of war times and later, holds to the confederate name Virginia in his account of the famous duel, which follows in part:

At 9 o'clock the same night, the newly finished ironclad Monitor arrived at Fort Monroe from New York, under command of Lieutenant John L. Worden. Her appearance is not anticipated. It may be that her existence is unknown to the confederates. About midnight she takes position by the side of the Minnesota. As anticipated, next morning at 5 o'clock the Virginia with her consort comes out from Norfolk. She opens fire on the Minnesota. She does not see the little Monitor lying behind the frigate. Soon the monitor appears. She is an object of curiosity, if not of ridicule. She lies so low and is so small that surely she will not attempt to cope with the Virginia. The commander of that vessel, which would have been more than a match for the finest ship in the English or French navy, observes what confronts him. It is an insignificant looking little nondescript. It resembles a raft with a cheese box on it. No such man-of-war was ever before seen. It advances to meet the Virginia. Was there ever such impudence! A mingled feeling of curiosity and contempt runs through the officers of that vessel. The very waves seem to laugh at the odd and audacious craft. But it was soon found that the Virginia has a few not to be despised, one entirely worthy of her highest prowess. Promptly obeying the signal to attack, the Monitor runs down past the Minnesota to lay herself close alongside the Virginia, between that formidable vessel and the Minnesota. It is the contest of David and Goliath over again. The Virginia is accompanied by the Yorktown and Jamestown. The two latter are crowded with troops, come to board and capture the Minnesota. It is a gala day in Norfolk. Everybody is in high glee over the expected victory and prize. Will the expectation be fulfilled?

A shot from the Monitor arrests the

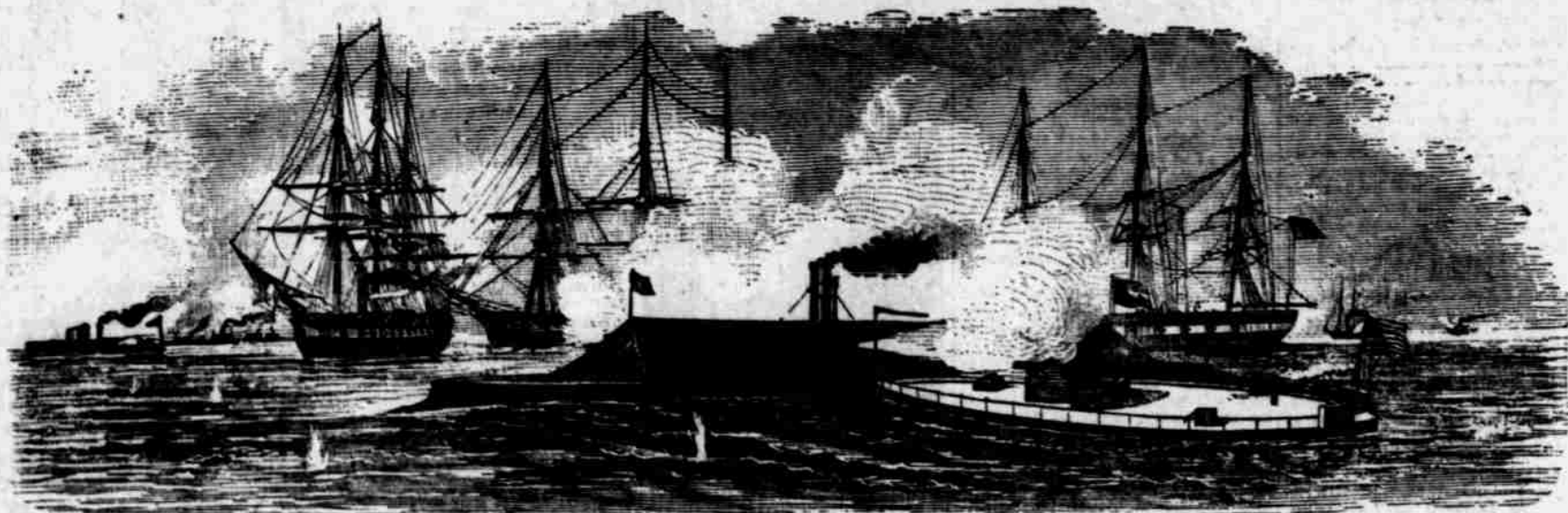
advance of the Yorktown, but the Virginia continues to approach. It is within 100 yards of the daring little antagonist. At this distance the engagement begins. It lasts several hours. It is a furious cannonade. It is hot and close. The vessels fight within from fifty to 200 yards of each other. The Monitor carries two guns against the Virginia's eight. The revolving turret enables the Monitor to be ready for the "occasion sudden." It is blow for blow. This tends to equalize the conditions of the duel. The Virginia finds the Monitor impenetrable to shot and shell. It therefore attempts to run it down. It fails in this. The Monitor avoids the blows of its enemy. It still deals pointblank shots at short range against its ponderous antagonist. At length the Virginia stabs the Monitor in the side. It thrusts in vain. No damage results. The Monitor spins around like a top. It soon obtains its bearing again, and sends one of its formidable missiles into its huge opponent. By this time the officers of the Monitor have acquired complete confidence in its impregnability. They no longer fire at random or hastily. The Monitor works round the Virginia, repeatedly probing her sides. She seeks for weak points and reserves her fire with coolness until she has the right spot. Now she steadies for a telling blow. She takes the exact range. Crash! crash! crash! three shots are dealt in this deliberate way. The Virginia will take no prize today! She is overmatched. She now resorts to retreat. She is swifter than the Monitor. She will try the Minnesota again. She turns to renew the attack on that vessel. The Monitor will not permit this. She comes up and takes position between the two ships. She again makes the Virginia feel her prowess. Where are the consorts of the latter? They may go back with their boards. It is now high noon. The four hours' conflict is over. The Virginia is seriously damaged. Like a wounded giant she moves off for Sewell's point at full speed. The Monitor follows for some distance, but she is outstripped in the race. She abandons the pursuit and returns to the Minnesota. Viva! Viva! little Monitor.

The story of this conflict is the romance of the war, where mechanism and genius gave so much invincibility to the northern cause. The confederates were under the impression that the thrust of the Virginia's ram had inflicted serious damage upon the Monitor; but this was not the case. She sustained no injury, while on the other hand, one confederate authority states that the Virginia lost her iron bark in her plunge at the Monitor. The Virginia lost her ram and sprang a leak. The same writer boasts that the Monitor ran off in a crippled condition. The committee on naval affairs, of which the writer has been recently chairman, reported upon this remarkable fight in order to adjust a claim for prize. The examination resulted in a report from Judge Hallattine of Tennessee, which denies that the Virginia was seriously damaged. The opposite opinion is presented in the report of Mr. John R. Thomas of Illinois, which asserts that this victory of the Monitor ultimately caused the destruction of the Virginia. Both reports are reconcilable with the facts; for, although the Virginia was disabled in some respects and required some repair, she was not altogether disabled. There can be no question as to the ability and gallantry with which the two armed vessels fought. But it will always remain an open question as to the extent of damage done to the Virginia. The Monitor came out unscathed.

The merit of having invented or planned the armor of the formidable confederate ironclad is due to Lieutenant John M. Brooke of the Confederate States navy. The need of high prize need not be withheld from an

improved and wonderful achievement in naval architecture which could have destroyed a fleet of ordinary wooden vessels, because it was immediately surpassed as a factor in naval warfare by the marvelous invention of the Monitor. Both inventions are American. America may well be proud of them. An American boy named Timby invented the revolving turret twenty years before. This was in 1841 when he was only 19 years old. He caught the idea in crossing the ferry from New York to Jersey City. In passing Castle William it occurred to him that a

## Fifty Years' Development of the Fighting Ship



★ NAVAL COMBAT BETWEEN THE MERRIMAC AND THE MONITOR. ★

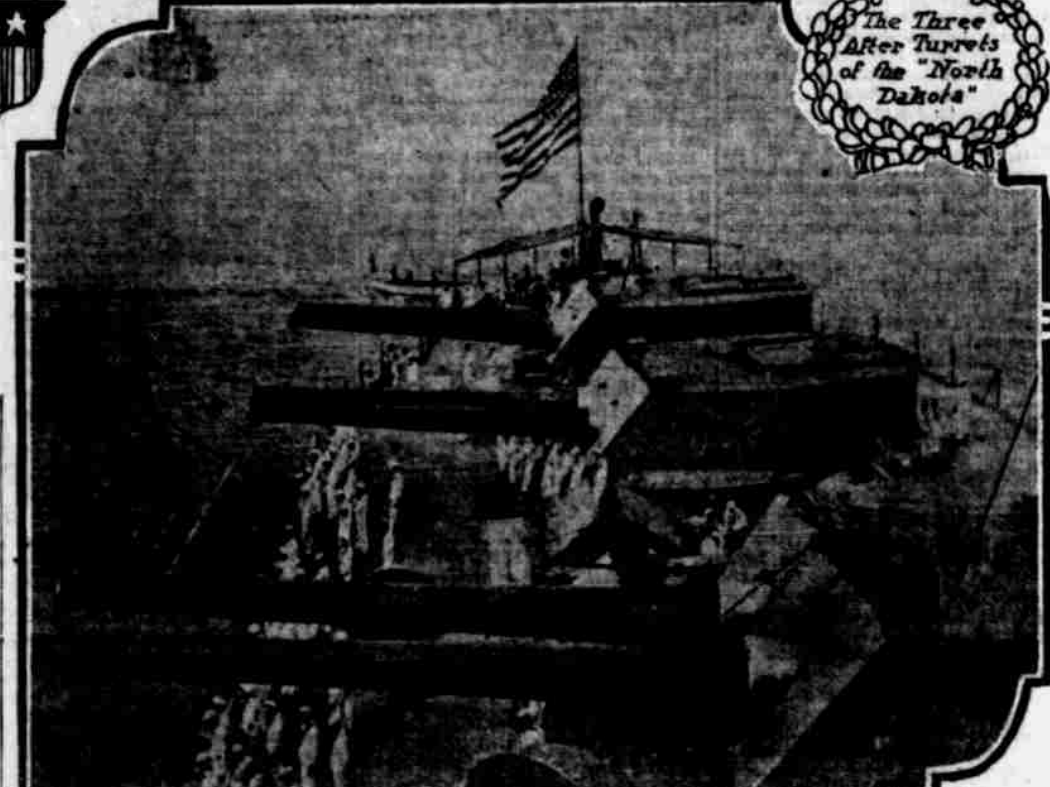
1862 "MONITOR"	1,000 TONS, TWO 11-IN.
1864 "ROYAL SOVEREIGN" (BRIT.)	3,200 TONS, FIVE 9-IN.
1876 "MANTONVILLE" (BRIT.)	3,990 TONS, FOUR 10-IN.
1875 "DELAWARE" (BRIT.)	10,850 TONS, FOUR 12.5-IN.
1876 "INFLEXIBLE" (BRIT.)	11,000 TONS, FOUR 16-IN.
1882 "FURBER" (BRIT.)	6,060 TONS, FOUR 10-IN.
1887 "VICTORIA" (BRIT.)	10,470 TONS, TWO 16.25-IN.
1900 "OSAGE" (BRIT.)	3,235 TONS, TWO 12-IN.
1906 "HIGHLAND" (BRIT.)	16,000 TONS, EIGHT 12-IN.
1911 "ARKANSAS" (BRIT.)	26,000 TONS, TWELVE 12-IN.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TURRET SHIPS FROM 1862 TO 1911

similar structure of iron on a revolving base, could bring all its guns to bear on any part of the channel. He filed a caveat for his invention in the patent office on January 14, 1841. The same year he exhibited a model before President Tyler and his cabinet. Mr. Jefferson Davis was one of the gentlemen who thought well of the invention. Mr. Timby went to France with his model. He exhibited it to the Emperor Napoleon III. But it remained for the genius of Ericsson to apply the revolving turret in actual warfare. How well he executed the design the battle just



U.S.S. "DELAWARE" WITH CENTER LINE TURRETS. From the "Scientific American"



The Three After Turrets of the "North Dakota"

FROM THE SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

described tells—that battle of the Triton and the minnow in Hampton Roads in 1862 in which the minnow won. It would seem from this miraculous result that the great at once to devise plans in projectiles and armor and to remodel their ships of war upon the new American patterns. Both ironclads suffered an inglorious end. The Merrimac, as it is universally known, was forced into an untenable position by the movements of the union land forces and was blown up by the confederates the following May. On the night of December 28, 1862, the Monitor, in tow of the frigate Rhode Island, went to the bottom during a gale off Cape Hatteras. Four officers and twelve seamen going to their doom with famous "cheesebox on a raft."

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Bread and butter	
Pie	
Tea or Coffee	
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